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FCC begins work amid row over selection criteria

- Seniority principle seen flouted as ex-CB judges sidelined
- Lawyers fear judges chosen for loyalty, not competence
- Five judges boycott oath-taking ceremony
- President accepts Mansoor, Minallah resignations; lawyers hail duo as 'national heroes'
- Full court skips FCC, resignations issue; okays SC Rules

By Nasir Iqbal and Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) formally commenced on Friday after its chief justice and four judges took oath, though the proceedings were overshadowed by a boycott from five senior judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and questions are being raised over what principle, if any, guided these appointments.

Critics point out that if seniority was the yardstick, none of the appointees — except Justice Aminuddin Khan, who has been elevated as chief justice of the FCC — is senior to members of the now-defunct Constitutional Bench (CB) of the Supreme Court, several of whom have been ignored.

This, they argue, is done in contrast to the spirit of the 1996 *Al-Jihad Trust* case, which ruled that appointments to the superior courts should be transparent so that litigants and the people at large retain faith in the independence of the judiciary.

If constitutional expertise was the criterion, none of these judges is known for pursuing constitutional matters in their practice as lawyers or has to their credit any significant constitutional judgements, again, except for Justice Aminuddin, who, as a CB member, decided a number of constitutional matters.

"People have every right to know the transparent criteria on the basis of which these judges were picked to create history by becoming judges of the FCC, and on what basis other CB judges were sidelined," commented a senior counsel on condition of anonymity, adding that the resignation of two Supreme Court judges before these appointments had already made the FCC controversial.

According to a notification issued on Friday, Justices Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Aamer Farooq, Ali Baqar Najafi, Muhammad Karim Khan Agha, Rozi Khan Barrech and Arshad Hussain Shah were appointed FCC judges by President Asif Ali Zardari under Article 175A(3), read with Article 175C, of the newly amended Constitution through the 27th Amendment.

Khawaja Asif assails judiciary in defence of 27th Amendment: Page 3

Judges depart: Editorial on Page 6

Soon after taking the oath, the FCC chief justice appointed retired district and sessions judge Muhammad Hafeez Ullah Khan as registrar of the new court for a period of three years and Mazhar Bhatti as the chief justice's secretary. Their terms and conditions will be determined later.

Justice Aminuddin Khan, who in the morning was sworn in as FCC chief justice by the president at the Presidency, later administered the oath to Justices Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Aamer Farooq and Ali Baqar Najafi in the courtyard of the IHC.

During the IHC ceremony, none of the judges of the Supreme Court, most conspicuously Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi, was present. Five IHC

Continued on Page 5

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administers the oath of office to Justice Aminuddin Khan as Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court at Aiwan-i-Sadr on Friday. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi are also present.—PPI

Four bills related to armed forces, SC sail through Senate

One bill seeks to reset Army chief's tenure after his appointment as defence forces commander

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: The Senate swiftly passed four bills related to the recently approved contentious 27th Constitutional Amendment on Friday, including one that seeks changes to the Army Act and resets the tenure of Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir after his appointment as the chief of the defence forces (CDF).

As explained by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar in the National Assembly (NA) yesterday, this means that the five-year tenure of the chief of the defence forces would commence from the date of his notification of the appointment.

The four bills were passed by the Senate today — a day after their hurried passage in the National Assembly — without debate and with little resistance from the opposition.

Apart from the Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2025, the bills also included the Pakistan Air Force Amendment Bill 2025, the Pakistan Navy Amendment Bill 2025, and the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Amendment Bill 2025.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar tabled the Pakistan Army Amendment Bill 2025 and the Pakistan Air Force Amendment Bill 2025 on behalf of Defence Minister Khawaja Asif until he joined the session. The defence minister presented the Pakistan Navy Amendment Bill 2025 when he arrived in the house. After him, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry tabled the Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Amendment Bill 2025 on behalf of Law Minister Tarar.

As Mr Dar began presenting the bills, he explained that the bill sought changes to the relevant laws in line with the 27th Constitutional Amendment, which was enacted into law yesterday.

The passage of the Amendment, which has paved the way for the establishment of a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) and changes to the military leadership structure, has been heavily criticised by the opposition.

Former and sitting judges, as well as lawyers, have also voiced opposition to the Amendment, particularly citing its implications for the Supreme Court.

But, little resistance by the opposition to the passage of the four bills in the Senate was witnessed today.

What are the changes?

The Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill seeks to replace the expression "chief of the army staff" with "chief of the defence forces" as per the 27th Amendment. Similarly, it suggests replacing the "Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee" (CJCSC) with the "commander of the National Strategic Command".

Another important amendment to Section 8A of the Pakistan Army Act 1952 says that "provided that for the first appointment of the chief of the army staff concurrently the chief of the defence forces under paragraph (a) of Clause 4 of the Article 243 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the tenure under this section shall commence from the date of notification of the said office".

Another amendment regarding the appointment of commander of the National Strategic Command says, "The prime minister may, on the recommendation of the chief of the army staff concurrently the chief of the defence forces, appoint the commander of the National Strategic Command,

Continued on Page 5

Jordan's king due in Islamabad today

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will undertake a state visit to Pakistan on Nov 15-16.

According to a statement issued by the Foreign Office, this high-level visit reflects the longstanding fraternal ties between Pakistan and Jordan. It will further strengthen the strategic direction of Pakistan-Jordan relations and elevate them to a higher trajectory, encompassing a comprehensive and broad-based partnership in political, economic, and cultural spheres.

During his visit, King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein will hold important meetings with the president and the prime minister of Pakistan. The full range of bilateral relations between the two countries will be discussed. A special investiture ceremony to confer Pakistan's highest civilian award upon His Majesty will also be held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The visit of King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein is expected to further consolidate the enduring Pakistan–Jordan relationship and expand the scope of bilateral cooperation between the two brotherly nations.

FO confirms visit

Meanwhile, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi on Friday confirmed that Jordon's King Abdullah-II ibn Al

Continued on Page 5

TTAP unveils protest plan against 27th Amendment

Marches to SC and LHC on 17th, 'Black Day' on 21st are part of the protest movement

By Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: The opposition alliance Tehreek-i-Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) on Friday announced its plan for protests against the 27th Constitutional Amendment, starting on Monday.

An emergency meeting held at the residence of Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen (MWM) chief Senator Allama Nasir Abbas decided that a resolution opposing the 27th Constitutional Amendment would be presented in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly.

The meeting was chaired by Mahmood Khan Achakzai, head of TTAP, president of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), and the nominated leader of the opposition. TTAP Secretary General Asad Qaiser; PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, Balochistan National Party (BNP) President Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Zain Shah of the Sindh United Party, Sajid Tareen of Balochistan National Party, TTAP Vice Chairman Firdous Shamim Naqvi, Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, Hussain Yousafzai, Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, Ali Asghar Khan, and Shaukat Basra were also present there.

According to the plan, the protest will start on Monday with a march from Parliament House to the Supreme Court, led by opposition MNAs and senators. On the same day, members of the Punjab Assembly will march from the provincial assembly to the Lahore High Court, and it was announced that lawyers will also participate in the protest. Additionally, a "Black Day" will be observed across the country on Nov 21.

The TTAP leaders renewed their demand for immediate release of Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi, and all detained PTI leaders and workers, as well as the imprisoned leadership and workers of the Baloch Yekjehti Committee (BYC). They vowed to continue resisting the recent constitutional amendments, terming them unconstitutional, and pledged to protest through all democratic means.

"We demand that the Constitution be restored to its original form, and this is our only demand," said Senator Allama Nasir Abbas, who is also the nominated leader of the opposition in the Senate.

It was noted in the meeting that both the 27th and 26th Constitutional Amendments undermine the basic structure of the Constitution and amount to an attack on the judiciary.

Mr Achakzai said that the fundamental pillars of democracy have been weakened, the judiciary has been made subordinate to the administration,

Continued on Page 5

ANALYSIS

Military overhaul: 'jointness' in name, centralisation in practice

- CDF to undertake multi-domain integration, restructuring, and jointness creation
- Service strategic commands to be unified under National Strategic Command

By Baqir Sajjad Syed in Islamabad

THE wiring diagram of national security establishment has been rewritten through the most sweeping overhaul of the country's Higher Defence Organisation (HDO) since 1976.

The proponents of the restructuring, introduced through Amendment in Article 243 of the Constitution and the subsequent changes in the legislations governing Army, Air Force and Navy, call it modernisation, while its critics warn about centralization.

At the centre of this redesign sits a single office, which is that of the Chief of the Army Staff, who would soon also be the Chief of the Defence Forces. The dual title has conferred new powers to this office with regards to multi-domain integration, restructuring, and creating jointness of the armed forces. The open-ended wording of the legislative amendment raises question as to who would shape the CDF's role, from joint force integration to structural reforms, which apparently wouldn't require parliamentary approval.

The legislation also abolishes the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, the tri-service post designed to maintain institutional balance and coordination within the armed forces in view of the lessons learnt from 1971 War when Navy came to know about the war through news on radio and navy's ship Khyber was lost after being hit by Indian missile, a retired four-star general recalled while discussing HDO restructuring with *Dawn*. The dissolution of the chairman's

Continued on Page 11

AJK politics heats up as PM Haq's successor named

No-trust resolution submitted; assembly session summoned on 17th

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: Putting an end to the unusually protracted uncertainty over the name of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq's successor to be mentioned in the resolution for a vote of no confidence against him, the PPP on Friday finally named party's regional secretary general Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore as its candidate for the new Leader of the House in AJK Legislative Assembly.

ISLAMABAD: Faisal Rathore stands with other PPP leaders as his nomination is announced.—Courtesy PPP

Soon after the announcement of the name, a no-trust resolution, signed by 25 lawmakers — 23 from the PPP and two senior PML-N figures, was submitted in the assembly, while Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar summoned the Legislative Assembly to meet on Monday for vote.

Under Article 18 of the AJK Constitution, which governs the procedure for a no-confidence vote against the prime minister, the movers, who must constitute at least 25 per cent of the total assembly strength, are required to name a successor in the resolution.

Ever since the PPP was tipped to install its own loyalist as prime minister with support from the PML-N, speculation over Mr Haq's likely successor had dominated political circles and social media for weeks. Among the names being considered were PPP's regional president Chaudhry Mohammad Yasin, Legislative Assembly Speaker and senior-most parliamentarian Chaudhry Latif Akbar, and ex-president Haji Mohammad Yaqoob, who had also briefly served as premier.

However, the 47-year-old Rathore, known for his close ties with the party's central leadership, also remained a strong contender.

The PPP's high command had delayed finalising a name, ostensibly due to the political priorities in Islamabad, where the ruling PML-N sought the PPP's support to ensure smooth passage of the 27th Amendment.

On Friday, PPP lawmakers were advised by the leadership to reach Muzaffarabad, and the name of the new AJK premier was first revealed by the regional president in a media talk outside Zardari House in Islamabad, shortly after Jumma prayers.

"Our chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has decided that Faisal Rathore will be nominated for the position of prime minister," said Mr Yasin, flanked by ex-premier of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf and AJK LA Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar.

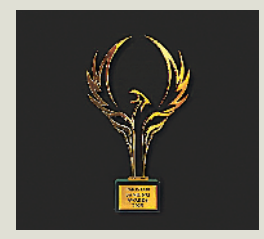
"The no-confidence resolution will be tabled today and God willing the PPP will form its government in the coming days," he added.

Earlier, Mr Ashraf said the PPP had taken an "excellent decision" and reiterated the party's commitment to the people of Kashmir. "Our priority is to ease people's hardships and pave the way for the next elections," he said, referring to the polls due in July 2026.

Soon afterwards, PPP lawmakers Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Sardar Javed Ayoub, Malik Zafar Iqbal and Chaudhry Ali Shan Soni submitted the no-trust resolution

Continued on Page 11

ON OTHER PAGES



Meezan, BoP shine at awards

Meezan Bank was named the best bank for a third time, while the Bank of Punjab won three honours at 10th Pakistan Banking Awards ceremony. The SBP governor urged banks to shift focus to private-sector financing, stressing digitalisation, climate-focused lending and support for SMEs to drive future growth. **Page 9**

Babar's ton leads Pakistan to win over SL

Babar Azam finally ends his 807-day wait for a ODI century, scoring an unbeaten 102 to lead Pakistan to an eight-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the second match, sealing the three-match series with a game to spare. The former Pakistan skipper, under intense scrutiny after 83 innings without a three-figure score, struck eight boundaries in a 119-ball innings. **Page 20**

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